

# Secretary of State Bill Jones

# OUTREACH

California



Spring 2001

**W**elcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of **OUTREACH California**. For those of you who have just been added to our distribution list, let us briefly describe what this newsletter is all about.

This quarterly newsletter chronicles the general subjects of voter registration and participation. It serves as one of the many ways that the Secretary of State's Office is sharing new and innovative ideas with other elections officials, community groups and businesses throughout the state and country.

**OUTREACH California** has two essential purposes:

- (1) We want you to share your thoughts and suggestions with us. If you feel there is something that others should know regarding elections, voting, registration, etc., let us know and we will include it in our next issue.
- (2) We want to share with you some of the ideas and programs that we are currently working on here in our office.

Together we can achieve our goal of 100 percent voter participation in all elections!

## Record Number of Californians Registered to Vote

**A**n all-time record number of Californians registered to vote for the November 7<sup>th</sup> Presidential General Election. The new total of 15,707,307 eclipsed the previous record of 15,662,075, which was set prior to the November 1996 election.

More than 600,000 voter registration cards were received by elections officials throughout California during *Voter Registration Week*, which was held from October 2 - 10, 2000. More than 40,000 Californians used the Secretary of State's new on-line voter registration process and more than 60,000 registration affidavits were submitted on the last day to register thanks to several "up-til-midnight" registration efforts.

## Election Technology Exposition

**T**he Secretary of State's office hosted the first-ever Election Technology Expo on January 16, 2001 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Sacramento. Election technology and voting systems have been in the spotlight as a result of the November presidential election, and the Election Technology Expo brought together, under one roof, demonstrations of technology that can enhance and improve current election processes.



The Election Technology Expo was part of the Secretary of State's 10-Point Election Reform Plan. The centerpiece of the Reform Plan is the proposal to establish a "Democracy Fund" for the state to provide at least \$230 million to upgrade election technologies in California's counties. These new voting technologies were showcased at the January 16<sup>th</sup> Election Technology Expo.

## In This Issue:

Record Number of Californians Registered to Vote	
Election Technology Exposition .....	1
Your Vote Counts	
Outreach 2001 - 2002	
Smart Voter News .....	2

Siskiyou County - Highest Voter Turnout Ever!	
To Vote or Not to Vote	
7-Election 2000 .....	3
How You Can Get Involved	
SMUD's Outreach Efforts .....	4
California C.I.V.I.C.S.	
The Bulletin Board .....	5

## Your Vote Counts

**F**or the entire month of October 2000, over 1,900 school children in k-8<sup>th</sup> grade visited the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, signed a voter's registry, stepped into a voting booth and cast a ballot. They participated in the program, *Your Vote Counts*, which teaches children about the voting process, the special nature of a democracy, and our responsibility as citizens. A special "kids" ballot was designed to allow each voter to choose: a President; a past "greatest" American President; a favorite subject in school; a favorite sport; a favorite performer; a favorite kind of book; and what he/she would like to be in the future. If so desired, the student could abstain or write-in. After voting, each child removed the perforated voting receipt, confirming his/her participation in *Your Vote Counts* and inviting them back to the Library by offering free admission for the student and four family members. In addition, each participant received a patriotic souvenir after voting.

Voting booths were "secured" for privacy with blue curtains and decorated with bright red, white and blue banners. Docents staffed the booths and were trained to stress the importance of registration, care in voting, and each child's civic responsibility to vote.

## Outreach 2001-2002

**T**he Secretary of State's office plans on continuing its aggressive outreach efforts in 2001 and 2002. By actively working with community-based organizations, private businesses, and associations, numerous voter outreach opportunities will be provided to Californians throughout the state.

But we can't do it alone - we need your help! The Secretary of State's Voter Participation Unit plans on producing materials such as bookmarks and posters to remind Californians about the importance of registering and voting. We hope that you will help us reach out to all Californians by displaying the free voter outreach materials that we will produce and distribute later this year.

If you have ideas for increasing voter participation or would like to become involved in our outreach efforts, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Dawn Mehlhaff at 916-657-2166 or via e-mail at [dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov](mailto:dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov).

---

**"We hope that you  
will help us reach out  
to all Californians"**

---

## Smart Voter News

**T**he year 2000 was a successful one for SmartVoter ([www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)), a website produced by the League of Women Voters of California. Over 800,000 web pages were viewed on Smart Voter for the November 2000 election. More than 4,500 candidates and nearly 400 local measures were listed. Most importantly, all Californians had access to Smart Voter's information on federal and state contests and statewide ballot issues.

Smart Voter was also successful in the area of education. Smart Voter not only informed current voters, but future voters as well. Teachers credited Smart Voter for the success of students as they compared issues and priorities of candidates, researched who can vote, uncovered past voting restrictions, and compared federal, state and local campaign finance laws.

There's more on the way in 2001. Check Smart Voter's web pages for information on local elections.



## Siskiyou County - Highest Voter Turnout Ever!

**S**iskiyou County just conducted an election with the highest voter turnout ever! Only one eligible voter opted not to vote in the Fort Jones Jr. High School Student Council Election.

As part of their educational outreach program into the schools, Siskiyou County is conducting student council elections for schools in the county using their optical scan voting system. They train students as precinct workers and they conduct the election using their voting equipment. They have a generic election programmed and use generic ballots. It's simple and fun, and a great way for the kids to learn about the election process first hand! If you'd like more information about this program, please call: Colleen Baker, County Clerk - Siskiyou County at (530) 842-8080.

## 7-Election 2000

**E**ach day approximately 1 million of the 6 million customers who visit a 7-Eleven store in the United States buy a cup of coffee. As the temperatures cooled and the presidential election heated up, 7-Eleven officials saw a perfect opportunity to let millions of "everyday Americans" participate in an unabashedly unofficial, unscientific poll. During September 2000, millions of 7-Eleven customers not only were asked to select their favorite hot beverage, but also their presidential pick in the first-ever *7-Election 2000 Presidential Coffee Cup Poll*.

Customers were invited to indicate their presidential preference by pulling a coffee cup marked "Bush" or "Gore." Customers wishing not to state a preference for either the Democratic or Republican candidate were able to select an unmarked cup. In addition to being invited to participate in the coffee cup "poll," in-store signage and supporting advertising informed customers that they could register to vote by clicking on to 7-Eleven's website, [www.7-Eleven.com](http://www.7-Eleven.com).

This event proved to be a fun and delicious way to draw attention to the elections and to increase the number of citizens who exercised their civic privilege and responsibility of voting on November 7.

National results from the 5,200 participating 7-Eleven stores in 31 states during the September promotion:

- "I'm voting for Bush" cups - 21%
- "I'm voting for Gore" cups - 20%
- "No opinion" cups - 59%

## To Vote or Not to Vote

**F**or the kick-off of her 15<sup>th</sup> season, Oprah Winfrey went one-on-one with two of the leading presidential candidates: Al Gore and George W. Bush. As part of these special presentations, Oprah's website ([www.oprah.com](http://www.oprah.com)) featured a poll titled "To Vote or Not to Vote?" The poll asked people visiting the site whether they were registered to vote and whether they would be voting in the November elections. The site also featured a link to the National Mail Voter Registration Form, as well as links to the Federal Election Commission and information on voter registration requirements for each state.



## How You Can Get Involved

**T**here are many ways in which you can help increase voter participation. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Visit the Secretary of State's website at "[www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_posters.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_posters.htm)" to order some of our FREE voter outreach posters and display the posters at your place of business.
- Call the Secretary of State's voter registration hotline at 1-800-345-VOTE to request voter registration cards and distribute the cards at your place of business.
- Set up a link from your website to the Secretary of State's website ([www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)). This site contains valuable information on election results, candidates, initiatives, and ballot measures. It also includes information on how to register to vote, as well as an on-line voter registration application form.
- Visit the Secretary of State's voter outreach web page at "[www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_n.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_n.htm)" to find out about upcoming outreach events and learn more about our outreach efforts.
- Serve as a poll worker for upcoming elections. Contact your local county elections official to find out how to volunteer as a poll worker and serve your community. Contact information for county elections officials can be found on our website at "[www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_d.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm)."
- Talk to your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers about the importance of voting and civic participation.
- Share your ideas for increasing voter participation with us. If you think of ideas that are not listed here, contact us so that we can feature your ideas in future editions of this newsletter. Please contact Dawn Mehlhaff or Kirstin Hill at 916-657-2166 or via e-mail at [dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov](mailto:dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov).

## SMUD's Outreach Efforts

**T**he Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) participated in voter outreach efforts by printing special "voter registration reminder" envelopes that utility bills were mailed to customers in. These envelopes contained information on the voter registration deadline, as well as the California Secretary of State's toll-free voter registration hotline number.







## California C.I.V.I.C.S.

**T**he California C.I.V.I.C.S. (Community Involvement & Voting Information in Classroom Studies) program is the newest youth targeted program developed by the Secretary of State's office. The program was launched on January 31, 2000, to contribute to the renewal of America's commitment to community by encouraging young people to participate and have confidence in government and the election process.

Since being unveiled, the California C.I.V.I.C.S. program has distributed more than 900 copies of the C.I.V.I.C.S. Teacher's Guide to California schools. The fall 2000 edition of the newsletter was released and distributed to nearly 20,000 California high school students during the general election cycle. The newsletter featured a group of students from Perris High School who actually participated in the C.I.V.I.C.S. pilot program and aided in the final development of the program. The Spring 2001 edition of the newsletter features students from Paramount High School in Los Angeles County.

## The Bulletin Board

Please keep those articles and suggestions coming and remember to send them to:

Dawn Mehlhaff

Office of the Secretary of State

Elections Division

1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

E-MAIL: [dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov](mailto:dmehlhaf@ss.ca.gov)

## InfoSENTRY Services, Inc. Newsletter

**I**nfoSENTRY Services, Inc., a company that specializes in providing election information consulting services to federal, state and local election officials, is now publishing a quarterly newsletter titled "ELECTION TIDBYTES." The newsletter provides brief articles and bits of information related to the technical side of elections administration and related issues.

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, please contact Jennifer Helget at InfoSENTRY Services, Inc. at (919) 838-8570. You may also view the newsletter on-line by visiting [www.infosentry.com](http://www.infosentry.com).

## Summer Institute 2001

**T**he Summer Institute Subcommittee of the California Association of Clerks & Election Officials is planning Summer Institute 2001. The theme of the 2001 institute will be "Viva El Voto! A Study of Voting Methods for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The 2001 Summer Institute will once again be held on the beautiful Stanford University Campus in Palo Alto from Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the institute will be to examine voting methods, such as paper, Internet, and electronic formats.



## Contact Information

OUTREACH California is published by the Elections Division of the California Secretary of State's Office.

**Address:**

1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Telephone:** 916.657.2166

**Fax:** 916.653.3214

**Website:** [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

**Voter Registration/Voter  
Fraud Hotline:**

1-800-345-VOTE

**Editor:**

Dawn Mehlhaff

**Contributing Editor:**

Kirstin Hill

**Chief of Elections:**

John Mott-Smith

Elections Division  
California Secretary of State's Office  
1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814